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BULGARIAN HORRORS,
AND THE
QUESTION OF THE EAST.

A LETTER ADDRESSED
TO
THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.,
BY
H. A. MUNRO BUTLER-JOHNSTONE, M.P.

LONDON:
WILLIAM RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY, W.
1876.

Price Sixpence.

DR
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By the same Author.

THE EASTERN QUESTION IN 1875 ;

ALSO

THE TURKS : THEIR CHARACTER,
MANNERS, AND INSTITUTIONS,

AS BEARING ON THE EASTERN QUESTION.

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BULGARIAN HORRORS.

SIR,—A wit once said of you that you hated a certain person (since dead) as much as so good a man as you could hate anybody. If he had waited till the publication of your last pamphlet he would probably have seen reason to omit the qualification. It cannot be denied that you have made proof of a quite profane capacity for hating. Edmund Burke was of opinion that, “it was a serious thing to bring an indictment against a whole nation,” but you apparently have no compunction of this sort. It is the whole Turkish nation and Ottoman people whom you impeach. I will quote your own words:—“They are not the mild Mahometans of India, nor the chivalrous Saladins of Syria, nor the cultured Moors of Spain. They are upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one great anti-human specimen of humanity. Wherever they went, a broad line of blood marked the track behind them; and as far as their dominion reached, civilization disappeared from view. They represented everywhere government by force, as opposed to government by law. For

the guide of this life they had a relentless fatalism : for its reward hereafter a sensual paradise."

The first remark that I would make on this passage is, that your feelings against the Ottomans have led you to do more than justice to a political rival. You surely cannot mean seriously to exclude from your picturesque category the Right Honourable the Earl of Beaconsfield, whose "fine feelings" in one part of your pamphlet (p. 15), you jeer at, and whom in another (p. 17), you accuse of "ignorance or brutal calumny." Your indulgence in restricting your *Inferno* to the exclusive possession of the Ottomans is a violation of poetical consistency. Dante, if he had shared your views, would certainly have relegated the monster in question to the very last circle of damnation, unless indeed, as is more than probable, he had described a new one for his special benefit.

Now, with regard to the Ottomans, my hair stood on end whilst reading your description of that people. You who have rummaged into pre-historic times, and weighed the character of Helen, and sympathized with the temper of Achilles, must assuredly at some time or other have studied the history of the Ottoman race. May I ask you in what history, on the authority of what author, you have gathered the impressions of that monstrous picture, the repugnant details of which you hold up, at such a moment as this, to the gaze and execration of the people of England?

Not a student of that history, I believe, but will tell you that, from beginning to end, your picture is a caricature, and your history a travesty, its contents elaborated from your own inner consciousness, without the shadow of a shade of foundation in fact. The history of the Ottoman people, written in the pages of history, and open to all who like to read it, is this. Somewhere in the eleventh century four hundred Seljukian families, whose names are recorded by the historian, crossed over the Bosphorus and settled in the Greek Empire. The Greeks, who were continually at war with their northern (Slave) neighbours, gladly welcomed these brave and disciplined strangers, whose martial virtues they hoped would supplement the deficiencies of their own enervated and unwarlike natures. They gave them land to settle on, where they increased and multiplied like the people of Israel in the land of Goshen. In course of time this handful of nomads became a powerful people, so powerful that their alliance became a matter of importance to, and was equally courted by, Greeks and Slaves. By policy and skill they soon came to hold the balance between these two Powers. It was their character, their virtues, and their discipline, no less than their courage and their warlike qualities, which enabled the Ottomans first to maintain themselves in Europe, and eventually to become the possessors of its fairest portions. The Greek eagerly enlisted

the Ottoman in his ranks to fight against the Slave whom he feared, and the Slave no less eagerly to fight against the Greek whom he detested. And when, by these means, the Ottoman people became the preponderating power in the Peninsula, no allies proved stauncher or worthier, no support of the Ottoman power more effectual, than these same Slavonian races. In the two great historic battles of early Ottoman history, that of Angora against Timour the Tartar, and that of Ismid against the Seljukian Turks, it was their Slave allies whose valour and steadiness prevented the former from turning into a rout, and in the latter gave the victory to the Ottomans. It is worthy of remark at the present crisis, that it was for sternly repressing and punishing the irregularities and cruelties committed by these Slavonian allies that the discontent and misunderstanding arose which led to the events that culminated at the battle of Cossova. If at one time the Ottoman threatened to overrun Europe, and thundered at the gates of Vienna, I have yet to learn that in an age of might and conquest, conquest and victory are to be charged to the discredit of a race, and I defy any one to point to a single incident in history in which cold-blooded cruelty and lust can be shown to have been more conspicuous in the Ottoman ranks than in those of any other conquering army. It was John Sobieski, the Pole, who saved Europe and stayed the Turk ;

and nobly has the Turk avenged this historic wrong. Europe, saved by the hand of the Poles, allowed Poland, a century afterwards, to be partitioned and destroyed. The Turk alone remonstrated, and went to war in consequence. Again, in 1849, when masses of Poles and Hungarians, defeated and dispersed by overwhelming forces, sought safety for bare life, it was the Ottoman Sultan who received them, and who, to the angry demand for extradition, preferred with menaces of war, by the two greatest military Powers in Europe, replied :—" Am I, the Sultan of Turkey, who cannot refuse the right of asylum to the meanest of my subjects, to be denied the right of receiving and protecting these suppliants who have come to me?" The "black day" on which these strangers first entered Europe was, on that occasion at any rate, a day of salvation to hundreds and thousands of brave and unfortunate men.

I cannot here omit to notice a pitfall into which you have rather characteristically stumbled. Your historic previsions are proverbially unfortunate. In attempting to write history by anticipation the events that you anticipate very rarely come off. You proclaimed to the world that Jefferson Davies would make a nation. Jefferson Davies did a great many wonderful things, but this is exactly what he did not do. You send a pamphlet in hot haste to Murray's press to announce to the world that the Ottomans have lost their martial virtues,

had failed against Montenegro, and could not succeed against Serbia; and, whilst your ink is still wet, one of the most brilliant episodes perhaps of modern warfare occurs to vindicate the reputation of Ottoman prowess, and prove the singular accuracy of your judgment.

For what was Alexinatz when the Turkish army won the signal victory so graphically described in the *Times* of September 4th? It was an entrenched camp, surrounded on all sides by hills crowned by eighteen redoubts powerfully armed and commanding one another. For months past it had been put into a state of defence by every means that the skill and science of foreign engineers, and extraneous help, could supply. It was held by an army more numerous than that of the assailants, composed of brave men fighting behind entrenchments, where courage can compensate for inexperience, and where raw levies have often checked and defeated tried veterans. It was moreover led by distinguished foreign officers and commanded by a general of repute. From such a position as this it was that the Ottoman soldiers, those miserable and degenerate savages, who have lost even the fighting instinct of savages, drove the Servian army, general and staff, officers and men, natives and foreigners, McKellar and his uniform, "bag and baggage," helter skelter, *pêle mêle*, flying to Deligrad!

Allow me to notice another point connected

with the same subject. You talk of the Turk not being able to suppress this "miserable insurrection." Now, what is meant by a "miserable insurrection," and in what sense is the Turk "unable to suppress it?" Is an insurrection, in an intricate mountainous country, drawing unlimited supplies along an extensive line of inviolable frontier, fed by a continuous supply of men and money provided by benevolently neutral-allies (I am not responsible for this horrid solecism), such a "miserable" affair after all? Have not highland insurrections at all times tried the valour and the resources of the mightiest nations? Did the whole force of Spain consider a Carlist rising in the mountains of Biscay "a miserable insurrection?" Did not Schamyl and a few hundred followers give employment to whole armies in the mountains of Daghestan? Did the Scottish Highlanders never give trouble and concern, out of all proportion to their numbers and resources, to the might and chivalry of England? And, by the way, talk of cruelties and savage repressions, without recurring to the massacre of Glencoe, if I mistake not, history records the exploits of a "a butcher Cumberland" whose "track indeed was marked in blood," and who might well compare, for deeds of savagery, with the veriest leader of Bashi-Bazouks.

God knows no man in this country or century is going to defend or palliate those Bulgarian atrocities, the revolting details of which have made

the heart of Europe sick. That the rebels should, confessedly, have been the first to lead this dance of hell, and massacre, burn, and ravage everything they met with, is no excuse whatever for those who followed in their ghastly track. That condign and signal punishment for the hellish miscreants is demanded by the voice of outraged humanity none will for a moment deny. But I do protest, with all the energy of which I am capable, against the grim suggestion in your pamphlet (page 12) that the Ottoman Government or Ottoman people are directly responsible, by complicity after the event, for the horrors that have happened. I challenge contradiction when I say that for humanity, gentleness, and compassion, the Mussulman population of the Ottoman Empire—some wild Kurds perhaps alone excepted—will bear favourable comparison with any people under the sun, and to paint them as consenting to, and sympathizing with, horrors and atrocities such as these, is, I will not say, in your own forcible language (courtesy forbids me), “a brutal calumny,” but a monstrous and cruel injustice.

You have shown far less candour and fairness in this respect than Earl Russell. He forsooth cannot be accused of present partiality for the Turk. No one has dealt them sharper blows. This aged Brutus has struck home his dagger right into the heart of his former friend. But dealing with patent ascertained facts, of public notoriety, *he will not* overstate his case. He allows in his

published letter, that the insurgents commenced the perpetration of these foul deeds. You refuse to concede even this. To make the devil appear blacker than he is, you paint his adversary snow white.

But you are not contented with this. The contrast to the brutal Turk must not only be with the lamb-like Bulgarian, it must be with all nations and all ages. Not only in this country, but perhaps since the world began, there never were such atrocities as these. It is a sickening and ungrateful task to measure enormities with each other, so as to assign them their due rank in the hierarchy of crime, but foul and hideous as these Bulgarian atrocities have been, it took away my breath to read (p. 8) that they were "the basest and blackest upon record within the present century, if not within the memory of man." Has then the French Revolution quite slipped out of memory? That was not a case of dark and fiendish deeds perpetrated by gaol birds inconsiderately let loose and armed in a spasm of panic. It was the reign of Terror itself enthroned in the broad daylight, for two long years, in the very heart of the capital of the civilized world; and proceeding with its devils' work deliberately, calmly, inexorably. The massacres in the prisons, the Revolutionary tribunals, the noyades and fusillades and mariages républicains, all committed in cold blood, by executive order, by the consent and in the name of

a whole people, and that people the most polished and civilized in the whole world—surely for “blackness and for baseness” and devilish “refinement” these deeds pale even the horrors of Bulgarian atrocities.

I have purposely chosen the French Revolution for a comparison, not only because it is well “within the memory of man,” but for another reason;—not certainly to offer any apology or excuse for these atrocities—God forbid!—but to offer an argument in mitigation of the criminality of arming and employing the villains who committed them—for this, it seems to me, is the real charge to be laid to the door of the Ottoman local authorities. I borrow the argument for palliation from the distinguished Republican apologist of the French Revolution, Louis Blanc. “Try and place yourselves,” he says, “in the position of the French ‘patriots:’ consider the mortal terror they were in: weigh the circumstances which deranged the balance of their minds. Brunswick was approaching the frontier: a Congress of kings was being held: ‘the Emigration’ were collecting for revenge: traitors were intriguing at home: ‘the State was in danger.’” Now observe, whatever force such an argument may have, as applied to the French Revolution—and I confess I do not think it has much—it will apply with ten times the force to the case of the Mussulmans in Bulgaria. For here, whilst the regular army was away fight-

ing at the frontier, the Province itself denuded of troops, the air filled with rumours of foreign intervention and domestic treachery, the Sultan generally accredited with madness and his Vizier with treason, behold the foul details of a gigantic conspiracy, with its "catechism" of blood, comes to their knowledge, threatening extermination to every Mussulman man, woman, and child, and destruction to the Empire ; and almost before they can take the first precautions against the imminent peril, the glare of burning villages and hideous panic striking rumours confirm and deepen their apprehensions. If ever the State was in danger it is now ; if ever the maxim *Salus Republicæ suprema lex* had any vital meaning this is the moment. What occurred ? They telegraphed to Constantinople for troops, and for leave to defend themselves till they arrived. The answer to the request was affirmative. They forthwith put arms into the hands of every able-bodied Mussulman they could lay hands on, and emptied the very gaols for that purpose—hereby incurring, I allow, a fearful responsibility. It was the scum of the villages and especially of the large towns of Bulgaria, far more than soldiers regular or irregular, Circassians or Bashi-Bazouks, who committed the atrocities which have filled the world with horror, and brought this fearful weight of odium on the Ottoman people and Government. That horror and indignation should be excited and

aroused by the narrative of the atrocities which occurred, nothing more natural, nothing more righteous; that the humane people of England should meet in their hundreds and their townships and give forcible utterance to their feelings and sentiments on the subject, nothing more creditable, nothing more honourable, but that an English Statesman of the first rank, "an old servant of the Crown," should out herod Herod, and go out of his way to flog and lash humanity into frenzy, that a highly cultivated and polished student should travesty history and calumniate a whole people, that a responsible politician, a dignified Emeritus, should descend into the market-place and stir the seething cauldron of passionate inconsiderateness, throw policy to the winds, and the Ottoman Empire to the spoilers, surely this cannot be either natural or creditable or righteous.

Not content with denunciations, you have recourse to artifices. Your devices to excite prejudice against the Turks are ingenious but not original. O'Connell long ago frightened an old woman out of her wits by calling her a parallelogram, and you seem to wish to scare the people of England out of all remaining sympathy for the Turk by the roar of a poluphoisboio thalassees terminology. Good people of England! What a ferocious, blood-stained, lustful, hateful, wicked, abominable people must that be who indulge in Zaptiehs, Mudirs, Bimbashis, Yusbashis, Kaima-

kans, and Pashas! A parallel case to yours and O'Connell's occurs to me. During the Indian mutiny, a correspondent wrote to say that, among other indescribable horrors, he had been pursued from village to village by a "ferocious Dhoolie." People in England shuddered: they did not know, the writer probably did not know, that a Dhoolie is a sedan-chair!

I should like now to say a few words on the policy involved in all this. Passion is proverbially a bad counsellor, and what are the counsels which are offered to us in this day of frenzy? There is something amusing in one sense and melancholy in another, in the various solutions of the so-called Eastern Question proffered by the political Quidnuncs of our country. Not a day passes but a bran new solution of this ancient question is launched upon the world. To listen to these persons one would think that the scratch of a pen, a ray of common sense, would settle the whole matter for ever and a day. A numerous set of doctors, having made the original discovery that the northern races of the Ottoman Empire are Slaves, and seeing that Servia and Montenegro are quasi-independent Slave states, forthwith pronounce *ex cathedrâ* that Bosnia and Herzegovina must be allowed to follow their example. The internal religious, political, ethnological difficulties in the way of such a solution are no more to them than is the resistance of the Ottoman Empire.

They are moving *in vacuo* and laugh at space and friction. Another set of advisers, improving on the first, make the really *very* remarkable discovery that the Bulgarians are Slaves too, and forthwith throw in this tiny province, with its paltry four millions of inhabitants, into the bargain and the Confederacy. Another gentleman, addressing a large and important manufacturing city, improves on all this by a truly business-like and attractive suggestion. Considering its marketable value, and that base imitators, like Mr. Grant Duff, are already filching from him the idea, he ought to take out a patent for his invention. Not only does he propose to erect these Slave and Bulgarian States into a "Confederacy of the Danube," but seeing that an English Prince has married a Russian Princess, he would have no difficulty "in finding a natural chief for this Confederacy with its capital at Constantinople." This enlightened gentleman evidently thinks that Constantinople is on the Danube!

It would be a weary and very useless task to criticize seriously these brilliant lucubrations. They sound like pages torn from the imaginative dreaming of Edgar Poe. But you, Sir, are in a very different category. What comes from you will be received on all sides with respectful attention if not necessarily with approval. If ever a man had a right to enunciate or defend a policy it is one who having spent the best years of his

distinguished life in the Councils of his Sovereign, can say of the events of the last twenty years, "*Quorum pars ipse magna fui.*"

Your policy has the merit of being clear. Tear Bosnia and Herzegovina from the corporate body of the Turkish empire, erect them into vassal provinces giving the Sultan a titular sovereignty over them, and let us have done with the matter. But this last is exactly what would not happen. If you attempted this, you never would have done with the matter. The 500,000 Mussulman Bosnians, the warlike denizens of a military frontier, would light up such beacons on their mountain tops, before they acquiesced in your arrangements, as would illuminate the whole of Eastern Europe. And as you seem to lend your high authority to the proposal of dealing in a similar manner with Bulgaria, I will ask you seriously do you think that the Ottoman race would retire from that rich province before rousing the whole Islamic world to do battle with the Infidel? You may think this apprehension visionary. If you do, I will put a question to you. What would be your own feelings, and what would be your policy, if you were an Ottoman Statesman, and an ultimatum such as this were presented to you? You have evidently your misgivings, for you think the difficulty can be overcome by what you term the "European Concert." Surely the "European Concert" would have to mean the "European Crusade," and are

you prepared, with your humanity and philanthropy, to preach a European crusade against Turkey? It seems to me that like Peter the Hermit you *are* preaching a crusade against Turkey; but I observe there is this difference between the modern and ancient crusaders : Peter the Hermit led his motley followers across Europe to fight hand to hand with the "chivalrous Saladins." The modern crusaders will never march beyond Blackheath! As Mr. Disraeli put it, the more you look at it the more you will find that territorial integrity means very much the same thing as the *status quo*.

You have repeatedly lately defended your present policy by a reference to the past policy of the Crimean War. To sum up your argument it is this : " We purchased by our support *then* the right to dismember Turkey *now*." " The experiment of 'propping up' the tumbledown Ottoman Empire having conspicuously failed, we must now try an entirely different system." I have a particular word I wish to say on this point. I am neither going to defend nor impugn the policy of the Crimean War. That is a matter which stands by itself. But the twenty years' Eastern policy which succeeded it ! For that you are more peculiarly responsible than any living statesman, seeing that you have held high office in the State almost continuously since then, and for no inconsiderable portion of the time have been First

Minister of the Crown. Now, during all this interval, what has been the distinguishing historical feature of Turkish politics? The suspension of the Constitution, and the preponderating influence of the Western nations exerted through the Embassies at Pera. The old Turkish Constitution provided, above all things, checks against arbitrary power. The Grand Council of the nation, most auspiciously revived the other day by the Sultan Abdul Hamid, was the great deliberative body of the State. Ministers proposed, the Sultan executed, but the Council decided. Its functions resembled those of the Privy Council in England before that important body was practically suppressed and its place usurped by the Cabinet. Now the first result to Turkey of the Crimean War was the suppression of this Great Council. It was a *coup d'état* of the most portentous magnitude. For the first time in Ottoman history a peace was signed without its terms being submitted to the deliberation of the great Council, the Meglis Ommonnyi. A strictly limited monarchy was converted into a despotism; all checks were swept away; and the arbitrary will of the Sultan became law. The fatal consequences of this revolution soon manifested themselves. As long as Ali Pasha and Inad Pasha lived, an enlightened despotism effected a good many beneficial reforms, and Europe, and you no doubt, applauded such results as were achieved. But in course of time these statesmen passed away,

and the brain of the unfortunate Abdul Aziz became affected.

Now was the hey-day of jobbing ministers, bold adventurers, and intriguing middlemen. Lavish expenditure, profligate waste, and bloated dividends were the order of the day. Not an ill-omened bird of prey in Europe but marked Turkey for his quarry, engineers, contractors, agents, crimps, "financiers," a horde of plunderers and an army of spoilers. The Porte too was not exempt from the contagion, and the descendant of the Caliphs fattened and batten on the general corruption.

Contrary to the practice of the past, the principles of their religion, and the traditions of the Empire, a national debt was created. Extravagant interest, fancy premiums, and exorbitant commissions necessitated fresh issues and new loans. Merrily went the quotations. Not a thought of the advancing and inevitable ruin. At last the crash came, and the hideous gangrene, of which bankruptcy was only one manifestation, was revealed in all its nakedness.

Now for this "anarchical misrule," for this ruin and bankruptcy, for the international complications and European crisis which have come out of it all, I have no hesitation in saying that you, Sir, are more directly responsible than any other living statesman out of Turkey. It is not an "infinitesimal share of responsibility," but the whole unmitigated undivided portion of it which I lay to

your door—the responsibility of a man who could have shut the floodgates of corruption, and stayed the torrent of misrule,—and who neglected to do so.

For, in the first place, none of the things *could* have occurred if the old Constitution had not been violated, and the Great Council suspended; and the suspension of the Constitution—the head and front of all offending—by which rein was given to the mad will of a demented sovereign, and a whole legion of evils let loose on this devoted land, was the direct result and first fruits of the influence of the Western nations on the councils of the Porte. A principal actor in these events, is it, or is it not, just to saddle you with the responsibility?

In the second place, such was the influence of England at Constantinople that a word spoken there at the right moment, such a word as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe knew how to pronounce and when to pronounce, would have overturned the whole conspiracy of misrule and corruption, and given heart to the patriotic party, who, with patriotic anguish in their hearts, foresaw the ruin which they were impotent to prevent. A word from the English Ambassador, pronounced in earnest against the blighting régime, which lasted in Turkey all through your long premiership in England, would have been to them like a beacon in the darkness, a flash of hope, a signal for

recovery. That word, for ten long dreary years, was looked for in vain. You were far too engrossed with your compound householder, your upas trees, and the silvern streak which bounds our insular politics, to give even a passing thought "to the cloudy Euxine and the bright Ægean." That is not all. When a private independent member, under an honest sense of responsibility, and acquainted with the facts of the case, brought the subject of Turkish misrule before the House of Commons last year, predicted the inevitable bankruptcy, and called upon the Government to interpose and prevent the crisis, where were you? You now talk of our solemn right to interfere by virtue of the 9th clause of the Treaty of Paris. Why, that was the very ground of Mr. Yorke's motion. Were you there to support him? You were conspicuous by your absence. Although the eleventh hour, it was not even then too late. Bankruptcy had not occurred: bankruptcy, as is now confessed, might even at that late hour have been averted: and bankruptcy, as we know, was the signal for, and partly the cause of, the present difficulties. As long as the mischief could be stayed, you were mute and silent as cold marble: but as soon as the crash came—the crash for which you were yourself responsible—in the many tongued chorus of condemnation there was no voice louder than yours, no reproach more bitter and vindictive.

And yet, with sublime irony, you talk (p. 12) of "a government to which we have procured 20 years of grace," of "England and France trying a great experiment in remodelling the administrative system of Turkey," and of "their drawing up reforms at Constantinople!" Shades of Othman, Soleyman, and Mahmood !

It is not for me to defend the present Ministry. They are old enough and big enough to take care of themselves, and you who have invoked the clear intellect and impartial judgment of Lord Derby, must be particularly gratified by the clear analysis of your arguments and the impartial judgment on your pamphlet vouchsafed by the "Grand Vizier." On one point alone I would wish to add a word. You accuse the Minister of postponing debate for party purposes. Not only is the charge unfounded, but it is exactly contrary to the facts of the case. When Mr. Bruce obtained a day, already late in the session, for his debate on Turkish affairs, he asked the leader of the House whether there would be any objection to the debate coming on. The answer was,—as I can state on the authority of Mr. Bruce, who told me at the time,—“The Government, *quá* Government, have no sort of objection to, on the contrary they desire, a debate, and believe it would be advantageous to them; but there are other interests of greater magnitude which they are bound to consider, and they think that a debate at such a

moment would not be conducive to the public interests." You will scarcely say that all this was a solemn piece of acting. When a Minister converses confidentially in the lobbies with a political supporter, there is very little acting, for very little acting is required. At the time too, even those who, from a Turkish point of view, desired a debate acquiesced readily in the plea urged for postponement.

You are particularly indignant that the Government did not employ the telegraph on the 26th and 27th June. One would think that Constantinople was in China! It takes just five days for a messenger to go from London to Pera; and considering that the mischief was done, and the atrocities committed, it is difficult even to conceive what practical purpose could have been served by this telegraphic anticipation of a despatch. The only person to whom a telegram could have been sent to any purpose was the mythic leader of the Bashi-Bazouks: "The English Grand Vizier to Ahmed Selim Mohammed Aza, chief of Bashi-Bazouks, Tatar Bazardjik, Bulgaria: Monster of blood! Stay thy red and gory hand, or by the beard of thy father I will send the great Eltchi to thee." Was it to our harassed and bewildered Ambassador at Pera that historical telegrams ought to have been sent? Why, as it was, that unfortunate functionary must have been driven very nearly off his head by the accumulation of duties

suddenly thrust upon him, and the difficulty of the parts which he was called upon to play. It is quite evident that, if you had been Minister at the time, you would have finished him off entirely. Delicate diplomatic negotiations are not unknown to you. Has your experience of the too free use of the telegraph been altogether satisfactory? Why, poor Edward Herbert, Lloyd and Vyner might still have been amongst us if you had not bombarded our poor Minister at Athens with undecipherable telegrams and incomprehensible instructions.

You present to the Ministry the horns of a dilemma. If they sent the fleet to Besika Bay to seize the first spoils of the inheritance of the Padishah, their purpose was purely mischievous; if to prop up the Ottoman Empire, it was criminal. Considering that Ministers have over and over again repudiated both alternatives, it is difficult to see on what fresh grounds you renew the charge. You surely do not pretend that these alternatives exhaust all possible decisions of Eastern policy founded on the despatch of the fleet. The Ministers are neither Brigands nor Don Quixotes. As long as British interests are not directly involved, Turkey must take care of herself, (and I suspect she is at last able to do so.) But English interests, which are essentially maritime, cannot allow the important bays and seas which communicate with the Mediterranean, to fall into the hands of a new

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions of the Board of Directors of the Corporation. The names are listed in alphabetical order, and each name is followed by the position to which he or she has been appointed.

and possibly aggressive Power, and events which tend in that direction, in a greater or less degree, cannot possibly be matters of indifference to this country. As Napoleon said, "Constantinople is the world." Another great statesman once said, "If the Turks did not exist they would have to be invented, for in any other hands Constantinople would be a standing menace to the world." Such was the policy enunciated on the first day of the session by the Prime Minister, and emphatically repeated on subsequent occasions. If ever a policy was clear and unambiguous, it strikes me it was this policy. It might not suit enthusiasts, whether so called Christian or Turk, but it was in conformity with the dictates of patriotism and common sense.

But here I must ask your pardon for a moment. Patriotism, in the good old sense of the term, has not lately been much in vogue with your party. It cannot be denied that you are in your right, so far as consistency is concerned, in your expression of disapproval of a Ministry that have preferred "the narrow selfish" interests of this country to cosmopolitan sentimentalisms. The very mention of the word "prestige" has the effect on some people that a red flag has on a bull: it completely unhinges their minds. A ministry, therefore, that has promoted "narrow selfish British interests," and restored the "prestige" of the country, must be peculiarly odious to a party that for ten years